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ABSTRACT

This speech outlines the role of the teacher supervisor in public schools. After a review of the negative aspects faced by many student teachers, recommendations are made for a better working and learning relationship between the teacher supervisor and the student teacher. The integrated program at Lenoir Rhyne College includes the following college orientation for a supervising teacher: (a) reading the Supervising Teacher's Handbook, (b) briefing at a dinner meeting, (c) examining the student teacher's Guide to Secondary Student Teaching, (d) conferring daily with the student teacher, (e) periodically conferring with the college supervisor, and (f) learning from the experienced or certified supervising teachers in the school. Ways in which the supervisor can help the student teacher include: (a) observing--help the student teacher decide what objectively to look for and explain why certain things happen; (b) participating--involve the student teacher in a variety of teaching activities; (c) teaching--gradually move from participation into the teaching process; (d) planning--gradually move the student into the planning stage; and (e) conferring--be constructive when criticizing and encourage self-appraisal. It is the job of teacher supervisors to share the knowledge gained from experience and to be receptive to the ideas of the student teacher, thereby improving the worth of the teacher and student. (JCW)

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ROLE OF THE SUPERVISING TEACHER

(Revised version of speech given to Appalachian State University extension course at Hudson High School -- October 4, 1970)

Let us begin on a negative note by pretending for a few minutes that you are student teachers again. The time is the week before your internship and the college supervisor is briefing his group about the worst to expect from supervising teachers. The commentary might briefly run something like this:

"Now, students, you may find that in the press of events your arrival at school has been forgotten, and no one seems to know where you are to go or what you are to do. You may soon find yourself in the desk of some blustering teenager who mistakes you for a transfer student. Your teacher may neglect to introduce you to his classes and leave you a grinning stranger at the rear of the room. Your teacher may seem unwilling to share his classes with you, he may actually prove hostile, may ignore your presence, or may ask you to serve as an 'errand boy' who collects papers and checks the morning mail. As you assume classes, your teacher may 'break in' to add information or actually take the class from you to teach it himself 'his way'. He may resent your presence as an additional burden in an already heavy schedule. Untrained as a supervisor, he may not know what is expected of him or how much training to anticipate that you have had. He may be fearful that you will be weak and jeopardize his reputation as a skilled teacher or that you will appear too modern, too effective and make him appear less competent. Your teacher may have stagefright, be fearful of a constant observer in his classroom. He may view you as a crutch and take advantage of you -- trying to assign you all his classes and paper load immediately. You may be-

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come assistant to the school janitor, or your teacher may lend you to others as a hasty helpmate. He may become very emotionally attached to you as a 'son or daughter substitute'. He may overprotect you -- or create havoc just to find if you can handle it. He may even try to make you into a carbon copy of himself."

Now this paints a rather dismal picture of the public school supervising teacher. But unfortunately many of these charges have proven true enough in the past to justify warning a student teacher -- so he may at least anticipate the worst and plan his reaction should it occur. This N.C. certificate renewal program in which you are now participating in partially intended to prevent just such situations.

We college supervisors have had only a handful of specifically qualified public school supervising teachers such as you are becoming, and the number of M.A. Certified Classroom Supervising Teachers is too small to meet the demand. Presently we must sometimes assign student teachers to first or second year teachers which is undesirable to a teacher during his first year in a new school, or to two supervising teachers for an adequate schedule... sometimes two students to one teacher at a time. The situation has improved in that we can no longer assign a student to someone teaching out-of -field-- but the fact remains that there is a shortage of really effective supervising teachers especially when one can now serve in the capacity of supervising teacher only once during a school year.

The state of North Carolina promises eventually to provide enough certified supervising teachers and to pay them a legitimate fee for their task --but promises grow stale after more than ten years in this business of teacher education. This one-credit renewal plan in itself, however, is encouraging-- and I suppose we should be grateful for small favors.

Certainly some of our teacher candidates provoke undesirable behavior from

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supervising teachers. They really ask for it or create their own problems! Student teachers have individual differences, you know, just as do pupils and their classroom teachers. Some student teachers are very immature and do not take the matter seriously; some are too involved in home life or college social affairs to give full attention; some are proud and self-centered about beauty, brains, or athletic prowess; some resent even constructive criticism though they gossip on campus about you; and some present themselves as a lump of helpless clay for you to mold single-handed into a model for "Teacher of the Year."

Most student teachers, however, are reasonably capable college seniors who want to become reasonably capable classroom teachers. Some are more intellectual, some more personable, some more enthusiastic than others -- but an academic weeding process has occurred to hopefully eliminate the "impossibles". The teacher-education process has improved tremendously in both quality and quantity during recent years so that only those with possibilities present themselves informed and willing at your classroom door.

They will become your protegees, their performance will reflect yours, you will give of yourself to them; they are a part of your claim to professional immortality! It has been said that the supervising teacher is the king-pin in this game of teacher-education -- and, oh, how true it is! "Learning by doing" is a golden experience, and your classroom for a while becomes the laboratory in which a student teacher is (1) to experiment with learning theory, (2) to evaluate himself, and (3) to develop the competence to grow on his own.

North Carolina, as you know, has an approved program approach for accrediting its teacher-education colleges. There are published guidelines (Booklets--"N.C. Certification" and "N.C. Student Teaching Program") for such programs which a college may presume to meet in a variety of ways. Then every 5 years a committee appointed by the State Dept. of Public Instruction visits to investigate and hope-

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fully approve each teacher-education college on the basis of how well it is meeting the guidelines and thus satisfying state requirements for teacher preparation. The guidelines include a range of course work on campus and actual laboratory experiences. College preparation that is recommended and examined periodically includes general education in many subject areas, concentration in a major, and then professional education courses.

Lenoir Rhyne is approved by the N.C. State Department and was visited recently for the second time under its approved program approach. We are also accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education -- which visits to evaluate every 10 years and improves greatly the reciprocity of teaching certificates granted in the various states. Our program is typical of many in N.C. and does include a plan of orientation for every supervising teacher -- so a brief description of our teacher-education framework might be in order.

Lenoir Rhyne sponsors an early semester of teacher-aideship for students who plan to become teachers -- during which students are assigned to various Hickory City Schools for 3 hours per week to absorb atmosphere and engage in clerical or simple teaching duties. Recently several Interim courses have also been designed to satisfy the aideship requirements. Our actual teacher-education program is concentrated into child development and educational psychology in the junior year and courses in historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations as well as methods and 8 weeks of student teaching in the senior year. We operate on a "block system" whereby all of the senior courses and internship occur in one senior semester with 6 weeks of three 75-minute classes per day preceding the 8 weeks of full-time student teaching. You may have read in the newspaper that we have been changing, modernizing and improving - we hope, our calendar and curriculum at Lenoir Rhyne. In 1970 when we went on a 4-1-4 calendar, our senoir education courses were interwoven for one semester with the student teaching experience ... some-

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thing like 3 weeks of course work, then 6 weeks of alternate days of observing in public schools and course work on campus, with a concentration of 4 weeks of full-time student teaching at the close of the semester. We thought this might help the student teacher see more clearly the practical implications of his education course work. We reverted to our present program after difficulties in scheduling but are continuously planning and seeking a more effective working relationship both for Lenoir Rhyne student teachers and for our public school colleagues. Our student teachers are usually supervised by the professors who taught them special methods courses -- a particular advantage of the small college!

Lenoir Rhyne supervising teachers are selected jointly by the Lenoir Rhyne Education Department and public school administrators within a 50 mile radius. Student teachers state school preferences, are notified of assignments, and encouraged to contact their supervising teachers early in a semester. Student teachers are sent to their schools to observe for two days about mid-way through their education course work to gather information to make their preliminary planning for units to teach, etc., more realistic. If you were involved, a Supervising Teacher's Handbook would be sent to you at that time. Shortly after, a dinner meeting of supervising teachers with the Education Department and its student teachers would be held on our campus -- with small group meetings after the meal and program to let us become acquainted and clarify policies stated in your Handbook. Each student has a Guide to Secondary Student Teaching manual of assignments to complete as his internship progresses. We encourage that his supervising teacher examine this workbook or lab manual which is co-ordinated with the Supervising Teachers Handbook. Each student teacher submits weekly reports on his activities plus work samples, prepares a schedule for each week to come, and is evaluated by his supervising teacher on a weekly report blank.

Lesson palns are to be approved by the supervising teacher and are subject to

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examination by the college supervisor upon request. Each student teacher has preplanned one unit on a topic to be taught when he has charge of a majority of classes. The college supervisor observes the student teacher and confers with the supervising teacher some 3-5 times as need or circumstances may direct. The final grade on student teaching is determined jointly by the college supervisor and supervising teacher.

Thus normal college orientation of a supervising teacher includes (1) the initial reading of his Handbook, (2) briefing at the dinner meeting, (3) examining the student teacher's Guide, (4) daily conferences with the student teacher who has had thorough orientation to what is expected before he arrives, (5) and periodic conferences with the college supervisor. Another important source of orientation wouls be the more experienced or certified (6) supervising teachers in your school. After years of cooperation with the city and county systems of this area, we often enlist the aid of the same splendid supervising teachers many times. One might say that we have and constantly revise mentally a preferred list of supervising teachers which eliminates a massive orientation each year. In addition, we now have (7) the N.C. one-credit renewal plan which will give approximately sixteen contact hours through seminars, conferences, and on-campus visits for supervising teachers who choose even further orientation for professional growth.

At our orientation dinner meeting last spring, a biology supervising teacher asked, "What do they really expect to learn from us?" And laughungly I replied, "The Real Thing... they expect to learn how to do it." You see -- we want the supervising teacher to be an active part in the process of teacher-education and to contact us for advice, aid, or complaint whenever necessary. We could not operate a teacher-education program without you -- you provide our laboratory and become education instructors where we leave off. You are the key figure in determining how much a student teacher will benefit from his internship. He has been told that successful student teaching involves five areas: observation, partici-

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pation, actual teaching, conferences, planning. A brief word about how you can help with each of these:

Observation - Suggest or help him decide what to objectively look for in various classroom situations, explain why certain things happen, help him analyze and interpret what he observes, suggest other activities when he has seen what you are doing and can no longer profit from observing. Later help him select other outstanding teachers to observe when he has learned as much as he can from you.

Participation - Arrange and involve him in a variety of teacher activities from ordering materials to typing guide sheets to grading papers to preparing bulletin board or display items to completing school records. Keep him busy!

Teaching - Gradually move him from participation into the teaching process -- perhaps by making announcements first, to explaining an assignment to the class, to managing one activity during a lesson (first helping you with supervised study or lab, then an activity on his own), then to cooperative teaching or shared teaching when one is directing the lesson but the other feels free to contribute at will, to finally independent teaching with the supervising teacher gradually withdrawing from the scene until the student teacher is operating smoothly alone. Sometimes stated also as -- helping individuals, then small groups, then entire class. -- a gradual induction.

Planning - Gradual responsibility for planning might follow much the same scheme - with the student teacher first trying to plot the elements of your lesson plans while he observes. Then he should begin following your general procedures so the transition in teachers and their "styles" of teaching would be gradual for the pupils in-

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volved. He should then be encouraged to decide how he wants to teach certain topics so you may both be teaching the same subject matter in different ways. Planning how is the life-blood of successful teaching! The student teacher needs to learn how to adapt the same material to ability levels of different classes ~~and different classes~~ and different pupils within classes... until finally he is planning for his own independent teaching, subject always to your suggestion and approval. Our program is flexible but recommends teaching one class per day the second week two classes per day the third week, three the fourth week ... until a full load of four or five classes has been assumed. How gradually he moves should depend very much on how quickly the student teacher develops visible competence.

Conferences - A professional teacher needs to learn the art of self-appraisal so help him formally or informally by being constructively honest about his performance. Compliment and encourage him, but suggest how he might have better handled a situation. Expect improvement ...and remind him he is forming habits for a professional lifetime. Ask him to appraise himself as he grows stronger, to analyze or diagnose a teaching situation as to its sucess or lack of it. Develop in him a growing awareness of steady self-improvement.

You will be somewhat amazed and deeply rewarded when results show that you are actually shaping and molding this amateur into a professionally skillful person! But there is still more you can do. He is there to learn the "whole story" about how to do it -- more than he can observe, participate in, and absorb in 8 weeks. So tell it like it is -- talk with him about your over-all plans for various courses, how you began the year with your classes, how you plan to climax or end the year,

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special problems of your subject area and how to handle them. Share what you have of instructual materials and ideas for learning activities with him. If he is from L.R., he may be stuffing a metal file called an IDEA BOX and literally "brain-picking" you while he is there. We improve the profession by sharing the best that each of us, young and old, have discovered about making teaching more effective ... and we hope that you learn some things from your student teacher. The greatest compliment you can pay him is to continue using some of his ideas when he is gone.